

IN THE CLAIMS:

1 1. (cancelled) A purified and isolated DNA molecule consisting essentially of the
2 nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1, or its complementary strand.

1 2. (cancelled) The purified and isolated DNA molecule of Claim 1, wherein said DNA
2 molecule encodes for a purified and isolated protein molecule consisting essentially of the
3 amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:2.

1 3. (currently amended) A live, attenuated strain of *V.anguillarum* which comprises:
2 a *mugA* gene comprising nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO:1, the *mugA* gene being
3 ~~mutated such that the strain is incapable of expressing a functional mugA protein the strain~~
4 ~~having a mutation located within nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO: 1 that renders the~~
5 ~~strain incapable of expressing a functional mugA protein.~~

1 4. (original) The live, attenuated strain according to claim 3 wherein the strain is
2 incapable of growing in salmon intestinal mucus.

1 5. (original) The live, attenuated strain according to claim 3 wherein the mutation is non-
2 revertible.

1 6. (original) The live, attenuated strain according to claim 4 wherein the mutation is an
2 insertion.

1 7. (original) The live, attenuated strain according to claim 4 wherein the mutation is a
2 deletion.

1 8. (currently amended) A vaccine strain against *V.anguillarum* infection in an animal
2 selected from the group consisting of fish, bivalves and crustaceans comprising:
3 a live, attenuated strain of *V.anguillarum* which comprises a *mugA* gene comprising
4 nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO:1, the *mugA* gene being mutated such that the strain is
5 incapable of expressing a functional *mugA* protein the strain having a mutation located within
6 nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO: 1 that renders the strain incapable of expressing a
7 functional *mugA* protein.

1 9. (original) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the strain further comprises
2 a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

1 10. (cancelled) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the animal is a fish.

1 11. (cancelled) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the animal is a bivalve.

1 12. (cancelled) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the animal is a crustacean.

1 13. (original) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the mutation is non-
2 revertible.

1 14. (original) The vaccine strain according to claim 13 wherein the mutation is an
2 insertion.

1 15. (original) The vaccine strain according to claim 13 wherein the mutation is a deletion.

1 16. (currently amended) A method for immunizing an animal selected from the group
2 consisting of fish, bivalves and crustaceans against *V. anguillarum* infection in the animal
3 which comprises:

4 administering to the animal a vaccine comprised of a live, attenuated strain of
5 *V. anguillarum* which comprises a mutated *mugA* gene comprising nucleotides 1218-2610 of
6 SEQ ID NO:1, the *mugA* gene being mutated such that the strain is incapable of expressing a
7 functional *mugA* protein. said strain having a mutation located within nucleotides 1218-2610 of
8 SEQ ID NO: 1 that renders the strain incapable of expressing a functional *mugA* protein.

9

1 17. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprises
2 immersion.

1 18. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprises
2 intraperitoneal injection.

1 19. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprises oral
2 intubation.

1 20. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprises anal
2 intubation.

1 21. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprising
2 immersing the animal in a medium containing the attenuated strain.

- 1 22. (canceled) The method according to claim 16 wherein the animal is a fish.
- 1 23. (canceled) The method according to claim 16 wherein the animal is a bivalve.
- 1 24. (cancelled) The method according to claim 16 wherein the animal is a crustacean.
- 1 25. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein the mutation in the *mugA* gene is
2 non-revertible.
- 1 26. (original) The method according to claim 25 wherein the mutation in the *mugA* gene is
2 an insertion.
- 1 27. (original) The method according to claim 25 wherein the mutation in the *mugA* gene is
2 a deletion.
- 1 28. (currently amended) A method of inducing an immune response in an animal selected
2 from the group consisting of fish, bivalves and crustaceans against one or more pathogens
3 which comprises transforming a live, attenuated strain of *V. anguillarum* which comprises a
4 *mugA* gene comprising nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO:1, said strain having a mutation
5 located within nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO: 1 that renders said strain incapable of
6 expressing a functional *mugA* protein the *mugA* gene being mutated such that the strain is
7 incapable of expressing a functional *mugA* protein, with a plasmid comprising DNA of
8 interest encoding at least one protein antigen for each of the pathogens and administering the
9 transformed strain to the animal.

1 29. (cancelled) A method for the detection of the presence of *V. anguillarum* in animal
2 tissue or fluids comprising:

3 contacting the sample with a detectably labeled DNA probe wherein the probe
4 comprises a detectable single-stranded DNA having a nucleotide sequence which specifically
5 and selectively hybridizes with DNA of *V. anguillarum*, the DNA probe comprising a
6 nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO. 1, whereby the
7 presence of the DNA is indicative of a *V. anguillarum* infection.

1 30. (cancelled) A mutated strain of *V. anguillarum* characterized in that the strain is
2 incapable of growing in salmon intestinal mucous.